

Re: Most U.S. Women Face Heart, Stroke Risk

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- *From:* "Andrew B. Chung, MD/PhD" <achung@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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neighbor William Wagner wrote:

<http://www.salon.com/wire/ap/archive.html?wire=D8ND28C00.html>

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Medical Writer

February 19, 2007 | -- Nearly all American women are in danger of heart disease or stroke and should be more aggressive about lowering their risk -- including asking their doctors about daily aspirin use, the American Heart Association said Monday in new guidelines.

It is the first time guidelines have urged all women to consider aspirin for preventing strokes, although specialists warn that it can cause ulcers and dangerous bleeding. They said it is probably not a good idea for young women with no big health problems.

"We do not want women to go to the drugstore and just start taking this themselves. It is critical that every woman talk to her doctor," said Dr. Lori Mosca, director of preventive cardiology at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and chair of the expert panel that wrote the guidelines.

The guidelines also advise daily exercise and less fat, and declare vitamins C and E, beta carotene and folic acid supplements worthless for preventing heart disease.

The guidelines were published in the journal *Circulation* with related studies on women's health, including one suggesting that hormone skin patches may be safer than pills for menopause symptoms.

In general, the guidelines aim to get women and doctors to focus on the long-term risk of high blood pressure, smoking, lack of exercise or being overweight -- even if a woman's current health seems fine. Even a single risk factor at age 50 greatly raises the chance of heart disease or stroke later, and only about 10 percent of American women are free of these problems.

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"We do not want women to wait until they develop symptoms to begin to take action," Mosca said.

The guidelines were drafted by dozens of groups worldwide, including the American Academy of Family Physicians and the U.S. government. Of the 33 people who wrote the advice, 13 have financial ties to heart drug makers, only three of them to a large degree.

"This is a really good gathering of evidence in women," after years of studies done mostly on men, said Dr. Sidney Smith, heart dis